

CONQUERING THE CONK-OUT

13 Essential Tips

Used with all forms of insomnia, these 13 tips should be the first response to the onset of insomnia. Indeed, these should be the primary tools in dealing with transient insomnia and as a way of preventing insomnia in general.

- 1. Establish a regular sleep schedule.** This sleep schedule should include both bedtime and wake time, whenever possible.
- 2. Establish a consistent pre-sleep routine.** It's important to do the same things each and every time before you go to sleep—this way, you can establish a routine.
- 3. Avoid caffeine within 3-4 hours of bedtime.** It is best to avoid caffeine altogether from early afternoon on if you are caffeine-sensitive.
- 4. Avoid alcohol near bedtime.** While alcohol may make you drowsy, it will disturb overall sleep.
- 5. Avoid nicotine near bedtime.** Nicotine acts as a stimulant to delay sleep while nicotine withdrawal may awaken you later.
- 6. Eat a light snack—primarily light carbohydrates—prior to bedtime.** Being either too full or hungry can disrupt sleep.
- 7. Create a comfortable sleep environment.** Here are some recommendations...dark curtains, white noise, comfortable temperature (cooler is better), comfortable bedclothes and bedding.
- 8. Stick to your routine while on the road.** When traveling take as much of your routine with you as practical.
- 9. Strive for a bedroom friendly environment.** Insomnia, in part, results when we teach ourselves that the bed, or bedroom, is unfriendly—a place to worry. Therefore, don't use the bedroom for work or worry. Deal with worries prior to bedtime—in a different room. Write down your concerns, consider an action plan
- 10. Get up if you can't sleep.** If you can't fall asleep within approximately 30 minutes, or wake up early, don't lie in bed. Get out of bed, go to another room and read or indulge in some other activity that induces sleep. Also, if you have been unable to sleep because of worrying, write down your concerns, and establish an action plan in another room.
- 11. Move your clock.** Turn clocks in your bedroom so they are not viewed from the bed. Checking time can be a barrier to sleep.
- 12. Facilitate sleep with activities.** Exercise or a hot bath, about 2-3 hours prior to bedtime, can help facilitate sleep. However, exercise too close to bedtime stimulates and prevents sleep onset.
- 13. Practice healthy habits.** Having an appropriate exercise program and eating a nutritious diet generally aid in good sleep.

